



Nodin Press

5114 Cedar Lake Road, Minneapolis, MN, 55416

Contact Norton Stillman (952) 546-6300 / Fax (952) 546-6303

nstill4402@aol.com

A Century in the Garden

One Hundred Years at Kelley & Kelley Nursery

Steve Kelley

In 1922, brothers Bill and Rod Kelley opened up a nursery on land near Lake Minnetonka where their parents had settled decades earlier. They called it Kelley & Kelley, and over time they developed a business serving the lake estates and summer homes of families from “in town.” In these pages Steve Kelley, the third generation at the helm, looks back at a hundred years of the family’s landscaping and gardening history, and also shares his thoughts on a variety of subjects, both horticultural and personal.

The local history is fascinating in itself, as Kelley describes an era when upper-crust Minneapolitans moved to Lake Minnetonka for the summer months, and wanted tennis courts and landscaped grounds to embellish their surroundings. So, too, is his account of how, as a recent college graduate eager to start a career in journalism, he inadvertently discovered that working with plants in the family business promised equal or greater rewards.

But much of the book consists of contemplative essays devoted to topics such as gardening with all the senses, the pleasures of weeding, shopping for plants, composting, garden renovation, and working with garden light in every season. The book also contains plenty of specific information about plants, of course, and draws to a close with a delightfully opinionated overview, drawn up by Steve and his wife, Arla, and based on a lifetime of work in the trade, of the “best” of everything from pruning shears to gardening hats.

Embellished with vintage photos and quaint etchings, the book will be an inspiration to gardeners everywhere, and to anyone who loves plants.

ISBN: 978-1-947237-40-7 / 154 pages / \$19.95

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